

## CHALLENGES TO BORDER MANAGEMENT: FOCUSING ON GEOGRAPHIC, DEMOGRAPHIC INFRASTRUCTURAL AND DEMARCATION CHALLENGES

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### *Abstract*

*The various threats to the internal security of the country are Left-Wing Extremism, Fake Indian Currency Notes, Organize crimes, insurgencies and unauthorized migrations. Majority of these are direct manifestations of external influence and have survived and grown due to encouragement and support which they secure from neighboring states. Therefore, the development of these ties between India's external atmosphere and its internal security landscape has made the issue of border management a major concern and a critical component of national security strategy.*

*Keywords -Border, Management, Geographic, Demographic , Demarcation*



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### **Introduction**

About 2300 years ago , a great scholar, Chanakya, learned the importance of internal security . In his classical treatise , ' The Arthashastra ' , he points out, that a nation could be at peril from four kinds of threats - external , internal, externally-aided internal and internally-aided external . Therefore, he suggests that of these four, Internal Threats like the fear of the lurking snake, are far more serious than external threats. The most dangerous enemy within.<sup>1</sup> Before taking up the Border Management issue, focus crucial. we have a brief understanding of India's internal security structure and its international border.

### **Aim of Study :-**

The maintenance of internal security comes under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Ministry of Home Affairs has various departments and divisions for this task. Two such departments are the Department of Internal Security and the Department of Border Management. Department of Internal security is organized into two division: Internal security. I Division handles affairs related to law and order, internal security and anti-national extremist organizations. It also handles policy and operational issues on terrorism, keeps a check on the activities of the ISI. The Internal Security-II Division manages issues related to arms and explosives, extradition, narcotics and National Security Act<sup>2</sup>.

The ministry has a separate department dedicated to the management of international borders, The Department of Border Management, Which also has a Border Management Division, deals with the management of international borders including coastal borders, creation of infrastructure like Integrated Check Post (ICP), Border Outposts (BOPs), roads fencing and floodlighting of borders and the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) . There is a designated Secretary for the Department of Border Management also.<sup>3</sup>

### **India's International Border and Coastline**

India's Boundary consists of 15106.7 Km of land border that runs across 92 districts in 17 states. Its 7516.6 Km long coastline touches 15 States and Union Territories (UTs) and 1197 islands which account for 2094 Km of additional coastline. In fact apart from Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Delhi all other states in the country have one or more international borders or a coastline or can be regarded as frontline States from the point of view of border management.

### **Border Management**

A border is a geographical boundary that separates two countries. It is an enabler, land bridge, fence and deterrence. Borders being hypersensitive can rapidly turn aggressive even on sparking of small incidents. Hence managing of borders remains the most sophisticated mission during the times of peace. The paramount objectives of border management are promoting a sense of security, guarding and securing the frontiers against illegal activities, while facilitating legitimate trade and commerce. Border Management includes securing the borders, safeguarding the border population, infrastructure enhancement in border areas and upholding economy, i.e. trade in border zones.

### **Challenges to Border Management**

The complicated nature of terrain and demography, fused with the problem of lack of infrastructure, along with inadequate modern technology and long standing border disputes are few of the challenges to Border Management. Moreover, review, inspection and implementation mechanisms as well as administrative and managerial issues have also added to the inefficient management along the borders.

- **Challenges of Rugged Terrain and Harsh Climatic Conditions**

Indian Frontiers host some of the most difficult terrains in the world and are a mix of a variety of terrain including mountains, plains, and hills. In addition to this, high altitudes,

riverine areas, thick vegetation cover, dense jungles and deserts add to the crisis. They also have a degree of ethnic mix and habitation.

These complexities of our borders have multi-faceted dimensions. The complicated nature of harsh climatic conditions and the inhospitable Terrain of Indian frontiers have been an easy conduit for militias, offering many opportunities to overcome obstacles without detection. These factors have contributed to the porosity of the borders, providing safe havens to infringe elements and enabling anti-India elements to operate from the remote hills. As their base camps are exceptionally mobile and their information networks remain very reliable.

Unforeseen circumstances and natural calamities including devastating landslides, shifting dunes, unprecedented rains and consequential floods have made effective border management difficult. Damaging fences, hindering visibility and surveillance make patrolling an arduous and backbreaking task. They have also been obstacles as far as infrastructural development is concerned.

- **Border Area Settlements: It's Demographic Sensitivities**

Fencing in the border segment is a complex issue taking into account the perceived threat, terrain and local population sensitivities. Border population is a very vulnerable community. What makes the areas adjoining the border both interesting and complex is that the communities which straddle the political boundary are of the same ethnic stock, with common language, traditions and culture. Border populations have different cultural and ethnic composition from the heartland and share proximity of culture, history, language and geography with their neighbours residing across the international border. They suffer from a real or perceived sense of neglect and misgovernance. Inimical powers can easily exploit this aspect and sow seeds of sedition and secession amongst some sections of the society of these states. This aspect needs to be looked into so that the sympathy of the border population always remains with India.

Due to ethnic similarities of both sides of the border populations, they are thickly populated up to the zero line of the International Boundary. It does not leave sufficient space for effective patrolling for the Border Security Guards. It also makes confirmation and detection of infringe elements difficult. The population on the Indian side of the border in many stretches consists of migrants who have come from Bangladesh who have assimilated in the local populace and settled down. They do not have land and their principal means of

earning a living is smuggling. Armed with voter's rights, they they have changed the demographic composition. Wherever there is a village right up to the border, there is a break in the fence making it difficult to restrict the movements of insurgents.

Varying seasons make it more difficult to identify where the International Boundary begins.

In certain cases the Indo-Banglades International Border runs through the middle of the village, passing through the back gardens . Houses in towns like Hili, have their front door in India, while the rear door opens in Bangladesh.<sup>5</sup> Various patches have been identified where half the patch is in India , while the other half is in Banglades . Such territorial issues make fencing a complicated task. Adding to the dilemma, land acquisition in India is another complex problem due to intervention from the State Governments .

It should also be borne in mind that bangladesh is bordered by India on three sides and by the sea on the fourth. Fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh International Boundary would not be a decent neighborhood policy, as it would lead to the encirclement of Bangladesh.

- **Issue of Demarcation : Coping with Border and Territorial Issues.**

India is the only country is South Asia which has not yet settled its boundary issues with any of its neighbours due to interventions from the State Governments . Large portions of land borders remain to be demarcated and have been unresolved due to differing perceptions and claim lines. Undemarcated areas continue to remain a source of tension and pose a hindrance towards normalization of relations between two nations. One of the most important problems in managing the borders is their delimitation and demarcation on the ground. India has an undemarcated border with each of its neighbor:

India has an undemarcated border with China, Pakitan and Bangladesh .

Nepal - There are reportedly disputed areas along the Napal-India border. There are several areas along the Nepal-India border where no man's land has been encroached on both sides.

There are boundary problems in the district of Sikkim which borders Napal.

Indo-Myanmar-China Trijunction - Northern trijunction, where the borders of India, China and Myanmar meet, which remains undeter- mined undemarcated till date.

Indo-Bangladesh - Enelaves and Adverse Possessions - There are 111 Indian enclaves (17,158 acres) within Banglades and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves (7,110.02 acres) in India. 6 Thirty-four tracts of Indian land are under the adverse possession of Bangladesh and 40 pieces of Bangladeshi land are in India's adverse possession.

India Shares the longest Boundary with Bangladesh with land boundary covering West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram. However, India signed India Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974 in which both nations had agreed upon the transfer of enclaves called Chitmahals and counter-counter enclave, called DahalaKhagrabari. However the 1st schedule of the constitution regarding Indian Territories and lack of political will due to vote bank politics affected the agreement . The 119th Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed in 2013 and with the 100th Amendment Act 2015 the land transfer was completed by November 2015.

When a border is not demarcated on the ground and when there is no common understanding between two sides, intrusions are bound to take place from both sides. Both the sides habitually send patrols up to the point at which, in their perception, the Line of Actual Control runs, posing a challenge to border management. The inadequacy of recognizable terrain features laeads to unintentional transgression.

Coping with long-standing territorial and boundary disputes is a multifaceted challenge. Indian approach to resolving border disputes is hampered by the Parliament resolution which decrees to take back every square inch of land under illegal occupation. As long as India has this resolution, no political party will have the will and motivation to work out a compromise. It is important for the government to work out a compromise in its boundary issues. Though the Land Border Agreement of 1974 has provision. for the settlement of the issue of adverse possessions, it has not been implemented so far as the problem is politically sensitive. 11 such transfer of land or settement will require amendment of the Constituent ,making the whole process highly politicized and time-consuming .

- **Inadequate Infrastructure - A Major Stumbling Block**

It is vital to pay focused attention to the issues relating to the issues relating to management of international land borders for strengthening of border policing and safeguarding. Creation of infrastructure like fencing.roads and flood lighting of borders is necessary for effective and efficient border management.

Existing infrastructure available with Border Guarding Agencies at the entry points of land borders is generally inadequate. Support facilities like depots, warehouse, parking lots , banks ,hotels, etc. are either inadequate or absent. All regulatory and support functions are generally not present in a single complex.

Poor road connectivity has hampered the operational capability of the Border Guarding Forces deployed along the border.

Fencing and flood lighting of the borders are important components of maintaining vigilance along the borders in order to check infiltration, unauthorized activities and illegal movements. The Government has undertaken the work of construction of fencing, flood lighting and roads along these borders. However the pace of progress of construction and maintenance of infrastructural development has been tardy due to complex nature of terrain, climatic and demographic conditions, pending land acquisition cases and delay in clearances. The cost of the project has also increased considerably due to price escalation, increase in the scope of work and upgradation of specifications.

### **Conclusion: Recommendations/Suggestions**

The internal security environment is prone to swift changes which suggest that merely policing the border will not solve the problems which are faced in the management of International borders. In fact, Border management constitutes tasks such as ensuring that there isn't any unauthorized movement/activity along the border, guarding the border during war times and protecting it in times of peace. Actions should be taken against the smuggling of arms, explosives, narcotics and any other kind of illegal goods and there should be proper coordination from various intelligence agencies which can in turn facilitate the socio-economic development of the border areas.

Apart from the representatives of the concerned Central Ministries, the concerned State Government should also empathize with the seriousness of the situation. State Governments must be actively involved in the process of finding solutions to border issues. Better results can be achieved by soliciting the assistance of villages in border areas. The centre and State Governments should be prepared to spend a much larger portion of their budgets to raise and equip forces.

India's land border and coastline runs along 22 states. These states have a stake in the management of borders. Unresolved and disputed borders should be the priority of the State and Centre. It is crucial that they recognize the importance of this matter and take up demarcation of our land boundaries with our neighbors. Each Ministry must have a dedicated section with various departments and cells working on border issues and resolution of border disputes. Unless the political leadership invests time and takes effort to resolve this

issue, unseemly clashes that do no credit to either will continue to occur and spoil relations with our neighbors.

There is need for recruiting locals from the border population in Central Forces, to establish closer linkage with the border population. Since they come from the area and possess local language skills and cultural sensitivities, they can build a rapport and formidable reputation with the locals. Their historic links to the regions and knowledge of terrain can be effectively utilized.

In the management of the International Borders, a critical role is played by the Border Guarding Forces. These Forces, which are more akin to the army, will have to be put on a different footing in all respects such as their recruitment, training, weaponry, allowances and so on. All this must be such that these forces can smoothly intermesh with the army in the case of any emergency or war or war-like situation.

Since fencing and flood lighting of the borders are important constituents of the borders, Government should undertake the work of construction of fencing, flood lighting and roads along these borders on a fast track basis. They need to be implemented in sensitive areas that are used as common routes for illegal infiltration. Fencing for improved surveillance and effective patrolling is essential and should be constructed about 100m from the zero line. All habitation should be behind the fencing, leaving a clear belt on 100m for patrolling for the Border Security Guards. There should be no village or town on the zero line. It will cost some investment, but the investment will be worth while.

Border surveillance cannot be achieved by construction of a fence due to the nature of the terrain and cultural similarity of people. It is often presumed that constructing fences on the international borders can put a stop to all illegal trans-border movements. This however is not the case. Firstly, it is possible to guard or police every meter of the land. Secondly, the construction of a fence along the land borders is expensive and requires a tremendous amount of manpower for effective surveillance and the desired levels of surveillance will still not be achieved. Maintenance and guarding of the fence would also need deploying a large number of troops and consumption of resources, rendering such exercises futile. A greater infusion of technology into border guarding must be done.

The advances in surveillance technology, particularly satellite and aerial imagery, can help to maintain a constant vigil along the borders, hence making it possible to reduce physical deployment. Similarly, the availability of a larger number of helicopter units will enhance the quality of aerial surveillance and will facilitate the movement of troops whenever necessary. However, these are both costly ventures and need to be viewed in the overall context of the availability of funds. The need for deployment of a suitable mix and class of various types of hi-tech electronic surveillance equipment like Night Vision Devices, Thermal Imagers, Surveillance Radars, Direction Finders, Ground Sensors, High Powered Telescope, etc. on the International Border of the country, to act as a supplement for effective border management, should be felt by the Government. The inadequacy of recognizable terrain features can be overcome by exploiting GPS technology to accurately navigate up to the agreed and well-defined line of Actual Control on the ground and avoid transgressing it even unintentionally. Drones should form a major part of the surveillance effort in difficult and sparsely populated areas, particularly in remote/inaccessible areas, and to supplement human surveillance and patrolling speed boats and floating Border Out Posts in riverine areas should be acquired.

The situation arising out of poor connectivity and inadequate infrastructure which has hampered the operational capability of the Border Guarding Forces Deployed along the border must be addressed. Their development must be done on a fast track basis by providing all the necessary clearances using a single window clearance system. Construction and infrastructural development of support facilities equipped with all modern amenities should be done for strengthening patrolling and surveillance. A Combination of road, rail and river transport system will provide the requisite connectivity as well as enhance economic cooperation. Construction of roads of operational significance in border areas to accommodate both economic transportation and security moves should be a priority. This way it will not only facilitate trade and passenger traffic but also faster security movement.

Establishing trade with neighboring countries will not only benefit us economically but also build up the trust factor. Trade between India and its neighbors has a lot of potential. Presently, cross border trade is minimal and is characterized by large volumes of illegitimate trade. In most cases it is almost equal or more than double the legitimate trade. The following measures can offset or minimize this illegal activity: A number of rail connectivity points need to be activated for trans-border transit routes. Open border trade of local produce in the



form of Border Haats need to be opened. Agreements with the Commerce Ministries of our neighboring countries should be made on commodities and reviewed from time to time. These measures could remove all the hassles of smuggling and illegal activities across the International Boundary .

Border Guarding, fencing, infrastructural development and technological up gradation are only a few measures to the complex problem of National Security , They can do little except contain the problem for a brief period. As some of the border areas have sparse population, the development of such areas by the State and the Centre are at times neglected. Since, grater focus needed to promote the political, cultural and economic aspirations of the border populations , the following are recommended: Special initiatives must be taken for development of social and economic infrastructure, promotion of people 's participation in development, eliminating the sense of alienation and insecurity from the minds of the people so as to create conditions conducive to social and economic progress. The Border Area Development Programme must rigorously work to meet the special developmental needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the International border. Schemes/works like construction/maintenance of roads, electricity, water supply, education , sports , filling gaps in infrastructure , security, organization of early childhood care and health centre, education for physically handicapped and backward sections must be emphasized upon. An infusion of funds into area development could lead to improved economic opportunities for the youth, which could pull them away from insurgent groups and from indulging in criminal activities .

Regular surveys should be carried in border areas and residence record of villages should be maintained and updated in border districts. Registration of citizens and non-citizens especially in border districts should be given priority. Immigration can be curbed only by giving work permits and not just by fencing the country. Attention must be given to the mushrooming of extremist establishments in the border areas. Incentive must be given to the mushrooming of extremist establishments in the border areas . Incentive must be given in terms of finances to those who give information about any doubtful activities in the border areas. Better State level policing and creation of strong intelligence network amongst the local population with in the states, will provide tagible dividends.

Special committees must be set up under vigilance of state and centre for reviewing, inspecting and implementation of developmental works. The task of these committees would

also include overseeing quick procurement, allotment and monitoring of funds. Maintaining quality of material, avoiding forgery, a check on corruption, timely completion of the works and reviewing land acquisition case would also be some of their duties.

The leadership of the country must realize that no internal or external security strategy can succeed in the absence of a broad political consensus among the political parties. All Parties must take a united stand against any kind of internal or external threat. They must have the will and motivation to work out a compromise and coordinate in case of crisis.

Border management should be inferred in an extensive sense. It basically means coordination and determined action on the part of the political leadership. The diplomatic, country need to work intensively to safeguard the frontiers and hence, perform in a manner which serves the best interests of the country.

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